

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

MISS GEORGIA M. NEVINS

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AFTER expressing a most cordial welcome to the members and guests, the president spoke briefly as follows:

“I am tempted to give a very brief résumé of the society’s history. In 1893, at the World’s Fair in Chicago, at the suggestion of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, of London, whom we remember so pleasantly in connection with the International Congress at Buffalo, a Nursing Section was formed, and Miss Isabel Hampton, then superintendent of nurses at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, was appointed chairman.

“For the first time in this country papers were read and discussed upon topics of interest to nurses, and there were present a number of superintendents of training-schools, most of whom were from the United States and Canada. The chair took the opportunity of suggesting the formation of an association, with the result that a meeting was held at which eighteen superintendents were present. I am glad to say that some of them are with us to-day.

“The objects and advantages of association were outlined, rules and regulations formed, and officers of the preliminary organization were chosen. The object was as follows: To further the best interests of the nursing profession by establishing and maintaining a universal standard of training and by promoting fellowship among its members, by meetings, papers, and discussion on nursing subjects, and by interchange of opinions. The results have surpassed their highest expectations.

“The importance of this step can be appreciated only by those who remember the curious spirit of jealousy and lack of friendly feeling which existed between schools in those days. There is temptation to dwell upon some of the numerous subjects which seemed clamoring for consideration in this society, all of which may be found in our annual reports, but I shall only mention a few of them, that we may better realize the results of coöperation, and be encouraged to work faithfully towards the solution of those difficulties which still beset us. A longer course of training, shorter hours of practical work for nurses, and a uniform curriculum have been momentous questions from the very beginning.

“At our last convention in Pittsburg a Committee on Education was formed, and the reports at this meeting are expected to give an excellent idea of what has been accomplished along educational lines in schools for nurses.

“Through the efforts of this society the Nurses’ Associated Alumnae was formed in 1896, now representing seven thousand graduate nurses. In 1900 the two societies were affiliated, and under the title of the American Federation of Nurses were admitted to the National Council of Women of the United States. ‘To provide opportunities for nurses to meet together from all parts of the world to confer on questions relating to the welfare of their patients and their profession,’ the International Council of Nurses was founded in London in 1899, and since then there have been two very interesting international meetings, one at Buffalo, during the Pan-American Exposition, and the other in Berlin last year.

“At this meeting of American nurses our sisters across the seas are with us in spirit, and we in turn extend our hearty good-will to them in their efforts towards improved conditions.

“One of the most important steps taken by this society was the establishment of the Hospital Economics Course at the Teachers College, Columbia University.

“Recalling that lack of opportunity for special training in administrative work in our schools, so distinctly felt by most of us when we assumed those responsibilities, the importance of which, fortunately, we but half realized, only serves to fill us with envy of those women who are profiting by systematic work in those subjects which not only make them better teachers, but also fit them for so much of that reform and preventive work with which trained nurses are allying themselves.

“Would that a Carnegie or Rockefeller might be made to see the true value of this work, that the chair of hospital economics might be suitably endowed!

“Registration is a burning question with us, and we shall listen with much interest to the reports from those States who have been so fortunate as to have secured legislation. We are told that the effect upon the standard in schools for nurses is already pronounced, and future benefits to the public and to the nurse cannot be overestimated.

“Not least of all that has been inspired by this society is our AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING, the success of which is so near to our hearts. The fact that its editor organized the Garfield School and set it firmly on its feet should cause her Washington friends especial pride in her later work.

“Among many subjects for consideration at this meeting is a revision of the constitution, and ought we not to begin with its formidable title? Apart from its inconvenient length, does it longer answer our purpose?

“Do we not want among our number women who, though not heads

of schools for pupil nurses, are governing nursing bodies, like those of the instructive visiting nursing, and of the public schools, and in the army hospitals? I sincerely hope that this wider opening of our doors may be agreed upon at this time."

NURSES' HOMES AND SCHOOL BUILDINGS

BY MARY S. GILMOUR, R. N.
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THIS branch of the work of the Committee on Education has a very interesting history, which I am sure would be much more so if the records were more complete. However, there is enough to serve as a foundation for future reference.

On looking over some of the incorporation dates of hospitals one's feelings cannot fail to be stirred to the depths as the imagination pictures the surroundings and the equipment of 1656. Were there annual reports read then? Did women read them? What were their trials and what their needs? Who were the patients, who the nurses? What were the ambulances? How was it possible to save human lives without the marble, the glass, and the silver accessories of the operating-room of to-day? And yet there was good work done then—work that not only saved lives, but developed brain and intellect and laid a solid foundation for the magnificent, glittering structures of to-day, which seem to defy death itself by the amazing scientific skill with which disease is met and overcome within their portals.

There were sent out 450 circulars for information, which it was thought would cover all hospitals and training-schools of note in the United States and Canada; 247 were returned, with very few exceptions fully filled out. They have been grouped under three divisions:

1. Hospitals of 100 beds and over.
2. Hospitals of 50 to 100 beds.
3. Hospitals of 25 to 50 beds.

There were 117 of the first, 83 of the second, and 48 of the third. All have training-schools for nurses, numbering from 5 to 145 pupils and covering a field ranging from Maine to California and from Texas to Winnipeg, Canada.

Prior to 1870 there were only hospitals to consider; training-schools, as such, did not exist. Of the 247 records here, we find 49 hospitals were in existence at that date, running back through the cen-